

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-07 IO-13 L-03
NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-05 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 NSC-05 ACDA-07 /082 W
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R 031909Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1228
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 09277

VIENNA FOR USDEL MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, MNUC, US, BE
SUBJECT: BELGIAN REACTION TO THE NEUTRON BOMB

SUMMARY. THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT IS STUDYING THE IMPLICATIONS
OF THE NEUTRON BOMB. PUBLIC AND PRESS REACTION HAS BEEN LOW-KEY
AND BASICALLY FACTUAL. END SUMMARY.

1. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE
FOR IT THAT THE MINISTRY HAS PREPARED A STUDY ON THE IMPLICATIONS
OF THE NEUTRON BOMB. THE STUDY FOCUSSED ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER
IF A NEUTRON BOMB WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE WEST'S ARSENAL, IT
WOULD RAISE OR LOWER THE THRESHHOLD FOR THE POSSIBLE USE OF NUCLEAR
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WEAPONS. THE MINISTRY STUDY DID NOT ARRIVE AT ANY FIRM
DECISIONS, AND CONCLUDED THAT ARGUMENTS COULD REASONABLY BE MADE
IN EITHER DIRECTION.

2. THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT HAS NOT MADE ANY OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL
COMMENT ON THE NEUTRON BOMB. IT HAS APPARENTLY NOT BEEN PRESSED
TO DO SO AS BELGIUM IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HOLIDAY PERIOD AND

PARLIAMENT IS NOT IN SESSION. THE SUBJECT HAS NOT BEEN RAISED BY ANY BELGIAN OFFICIAL IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE EMBASSY, THE ONE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL CITED ABOVE EXCEPTED.

3. THE SOVIET EMBASSY HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN FURTHERING THE LINE IN ITS FOREIGN MINISTRY CONTACTS THAT THE NEUTRON BOMB IS A NEW, DESTABILIZING WEAPONS SYSTEM, WHICH WILL HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE MBFR TALKS. THE BELGIAN COMMUNIST PARTY DAILY, LE DRAPEAU ROUGE, HAS TAKEN THE SAME GENERAL LINE IN PUBLIC BUT UNDERLINED THE NEUTRON BOMB'S EFFECT ON THE EAST-WEST MILITARY BALANCE WITHOUT CITING EITHER SALT OR MBFR BY NAME. COMMENT: THE SOVIET LINE HERE AS TOLD US BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SEEMS TO BE SLIGHTLY AT VARIANCE WITH THAT TAKEN IN THE JULY 31 TASS STATEMENT REPORTED IN MOSCOW 11063. END COMMENT.

4. THE NON-COMMUNIST BELGIAN PRESS HAS REPORTED ON THE NEUTRON BOMB ISSUE IN A GENERALLY FACTUAL LOW-KEY FASHION, WITH MINIMAL COMMENTARY. CHAMBERS

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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